1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

292
293
492
643

THE *ETSU* NUPE

[FACING p. i]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the existing political structure of the community in a kinship sense. The ancestors of the chief who are regarded as founders of the village are also thought of vaguely as ancestors of the whole community. These essentially mythical kinship links exercise no influence upon concrete kinship claims and obligations.

Political factors are also responsible for the development of the large units which characterize kinship among the ruling family. We shall see that the ruling house of Nupe crystallized in three dynasties, which trace their descent from different sons of the founder of the ruling house, and divide between them the rights and duties vested in the ruling house. The ancestors of the three dynasties lived only two or three generations back; but already certain religious observances (prayers on their grave) mark them off from all subsequent royal ancestors. In this rigidly defined system of reckoning descent in the father's line back to these almost sanctified 'first ancestors', and in the relationship with one another which is in the nature of mutual obligations for the sake of the larger unit, the royal house itself, the three dynasties correspond from kinship point of view to incipient *clans*—the only analogy to clan structure which we find in Nupe.

Let me say in conclusion that kinship structure in Nupe is not that dominant, all-enveloping structure which we know from many primitive societies. Although it bears upon religious life, education, and the organization of production, it is greatly overshadowed as a determinant of social behaviour by the factors of political organization and, in economic life, by economic interests proper. Indeed only because of its lesser significance in social life could we omit the detailed description of Nupe kinship from the sociological analysis with which this book is concerned.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [443] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[778] [2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

From that time Nupe history is linked indissolubly with the fate of the Fulani conquerors of Nigeria who had made themselves rulers of the main Hausa states in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The history of the Fulani *Jihad* has often been described,[1] so I need say only a few words. The Fulani established their suzerainty over Northern Nigeria in a loosely organized, decentralized dual empire, the western part under the supremacy of the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, and the eastern under the Emir of Gwandu. Nupe kingdom fell to Gwandu's share. The Fulani conquest was achieved in two phases and by two methods: a gradual infiltration of the foreign country by Mohammedan Fulani, and then, ultimately, a military conquest. The same policy was adopted in Nupe. Mallam Dendo was one of those Mohammedan preachers and emissaries to 'heathen countries' who was to collect an ever-increasing group of followers as the nucleus of future conquest. His followers seem to have included men of all stations: cattle Fulani to whom in their semi-nomadic life Nupe had become a second home; Fulani and Hausa mercenary soldiers who took service in the Nupe armies; merchants from northern towns; and Mohammedan priests and missionaries; I estimated their number at the time of the conquest at not more than 1,000 or 1,500. When Mallam Dendo became strong enough to venture the decisive blow, he applied to the Emir of Gwandu, his overlord, for military help and for a *tuta*, flag, which signified his official recognition as a leader and accepted feudal chief of the Fulani Empire.

The opportunity for the Fulani to make themselves masters of the country soon came. Almost immediately after *Etsu* Ma'azū's death internal trouble broke out. The claim of Maazu's son Jimada, the legitimate heir to the throne, was disputed by his father's brother's son, Majiya II. The details of this feud are not clear. According to some accounts Jimada was Majiya's father's sister's son, who had been appointed regent for the boy-king Majiya; later, when Majiya grew up and demanded his kingdom, Jimada refused. Other accounts make the two claimants sons of elder and younger brother respectively, namely, of *Etsu* Ma'azū (the nineteenth king of Nupe) and *Etsu* Mama (the twenty-first king of Nupe). Majiya claimed the throne by the right of general Nupe succession, being the elder brother's eldest son; Jimada, however, was regarded as the legitimate heir according to the ancient Nupe rules of royal inheritance which decreed that the son 'born in the purple' should become king.[2] Whatever the origin of this dynastic feud, it led to a temporary division of Nupe kingdom into a western and eastern half: Jimada reigned in Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe, and Majiya built himself a capital in Rabá, on the Niger. Majiya gained the friendship of Mallam Dendo and the Fulani group in Nupe, and with them on his side he became by far the more powerful, and soon snatched the other half of

[1] See A. C. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1929; A. W. Bovill, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, Oxford, 1933; C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, i, pp. 98–102.

[2] In Africa this rule of inheritance is unique, and cannot, according to Nupe tradition, have applied to Tsoede himself and his four sons who succeeded him. All informants insisted that it became, at some unspecified period, the rule of succession in the Nupe dynasty.

175
[643]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER VII
POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM
(*continued*)

KINGSHIP

IN the tradition of Tsoede, that 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom, the essence of the Nupe state is already clearly expressed, sanctioned, almost sanctified, by that paramount authority that attaches to prehistoric events: it outlines a system of political domination, growing by conquest and expansion, and governed by a group detached in origin and status from the rest of the population, and claiming its supreme position by the right of might. The small river kingdom which figures, in the Tsoede tradition, as the nucleus of the great Nupe of later times, and the vast empire under the Fulani Emirs, are essentially of the same nature. The twofold process of expansion over alien groups and cultures, combined with cultural assimilation and absorption, is reflected in both, in the ideological history of the Tsoede myth as well as in the 'real' history of the Fulani kingdom. In one there is Tsoede, who conquers Nupe with the help of alien magic, who brings into Nupe the insignia of alien rulership and culture, but who, himself half Nupe by descent, creates a new, independent, and united Nupe. In the other there is this remarkable piece of empire-policy when Masaba claims succession to the Nupe throne on the grounds of his being half Nupe by birth and full Nupe by education. If the mythology of Tsoede establishes the essence and growth of kingship, later history shows its vicissitudes involved in such system of domination which forces unity upon heterogeneous groups and cultures, revolts and feuds, kings deposed and exiled, usurpers and shadow kings.

We know little about the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times. I have mentioned one piece of information already which I obtained from various sources, namely, the ancient rule of succession which made the eldest son 'born in the purple', that is, the son first born during the father's reign, the heir to the throne of Nupe. A few other facts concerning the person of the king I was able to ascertain from the *Etsu* of Patigi. Certain ritual rules obtained at the king's court—and some of these rules are still observed in Patigi. Thus the *Etsu* may only wear white; he can travel and go out whenever he likes, but may not eat any food save that prepared by his wives; nor may any stranger watch him eat. Finally, no one may be killed in the presence of the king or in the town in which he is residing.[1]

[1] This helps us to understand the organization of the 'King's Hangmen', the crucial fact of which was that the royal executioners killed their victims in places far away from the king's capital. Another effect of this observance, which is still visible, is the rule which forbids the performance of the *ndakó gboyd*, a cult believed to lead to the death of witches, in Patigi, the present 'king's town', or anywhere within a distance from which 'the shrieking of the spirit could be heard in Patigi'. (See *Man*, 1935, 173.)

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

643 Although the present-day political system of Nupe appears to represent in many respects only a copy and continuation of the pre-Fulani system, the characteristic features of ancient Nupe kingship—the former rule of inheritance, the ritual taboos, and the sacred emblems and form of magic linked with kingship—have disappeared under the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs. But already a new background of religion and myth is forming behind the modern kingship. The memory of the ancestor of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, Mallam Dendo, has become sanctified. The stories of his life and exploits, emphasizing his supernatural faculties, have the flavour of myths. And his tomb at Rabá, over [788] which a mosque has been built, became a place of worship and pilgrimage. At the time of the election of the present Emir, when a number of important political posts were due to change hands, the *Rani*, a Fulani prince anxious to obtain one of these posts, went to Rabá, fasted for seven days, sacrificed in the grave-mosque, and prayed to his ancestor for help.

The disappearance of ancient Nupe kingship reflects the far-reaching historical changes which Nupe kingdom had undergone in the Fulani conquest. In pre-Fulani Nupe the link with magic and myth, ritual rules and taboos, and possibly even the law of succession, separated the king from the rest of the people, even from the members of his own house. Fulani rule, only recently established by undisguised conquest, and dependent upon the co-operation of a band of war-chiefs and faction-leaders, turned semi-sacred kingship into rulership of the strongest. The king becomes a *primus inter pares*, the highest rank-holder in a royal nobility ruled by precedence and promotion. The exclusiveness of primogeniture gave way to a system of succession that allowed for balance of power and could satisfy rival claims. This final balance was not achieved at once. Of the seven sons of Mallam Dendo three only were destined to found royal houses, two directly, Usman Zaki and Masaba, and one in the second generation, Majigi, through his son Umaru. Having once concentrated military and political power in their own hands, these three families eliminated the other sons and grandsons from the succession, paying them off with political offices the importance of which decreased from generation to generation. This resulted in three dynasties which succeed to the throne in strict rotation. In the genealogy given in Appendix II this development is clearly visible. This historical explanation of the present system of kingship is borne out by the views of the people themselves. One of my most enlightened informants, a very learned man and himself a member of the royal nobility, defended the present form of succession against the old primogeniture on these grounds: the old system could work in ancient Nupe, when there was a powerful *kuti* (magic) behind the *Etsu*'s authority. For the Fulani dynasty, which came to power as a large group, composed of jealous relatives and partisans, a divided succession was the only solution. The country too, he added, could only benefit from such balance of power.

643 We may mention here another change from pre-Fulani to Fulani kingship which concerns the political status of the Nupe state. While the 648 Nupe kings were absolute masters in their own country, the Fulani

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims.

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotū*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpā*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions.

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field.

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 652 661 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country, though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [675] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 652 655 439 661 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help [782] them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to 567] have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

565 *Táka*, held by eldest son of *Shaba*.
Sontsádrahi
554 *Wací Taba*, held by younger brother of *Shaba*.
Nda Iya
Nágemu, held by younger brother of *Etsu*, appointed 1935; no previous title; District Head of Jima.
'Old' *Natsu*, retired from office 1934.
Natsu, son of a former *Kpotū*, younger brother of *Ginya*; on the Bida Town Council.
Shabarabá, a new *ad hoc* introduced rank, bestowed in May 1936 on the eldest son of the late *Shaba*, as no higher rank was vacant.

2. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Usman* (*House of Usman Zaki*)

'Old' *Kpotū*, died in 1936; for some time District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: *Edupkā* (countries beyond the Niger).
Kpotū, son and nephew of former *Kpotū*; District Head of Kutigi. He will shortly be asked to resign, that is, to become an 'old' *Kpotū*, on the grounds that his health is not very good. The *Etsu* does not contemplate promoting him to the vacant post of *Shaba* in accordance with the general rules of succession.*
Nágya, till 1935 District Head of Mokwa, now member of the King's Council. He is chosen to succeed to the rank of *Shaba*. Fief in pre-European times: *Edukpā*.
Rani, since 1935 District Head of Mokwa.
Kusódu, younger brother of the late *Etsu* Bello, living in his Bida house. Fief in pre-European times: Kamberi country.
Wací Tswa
Shaba Gíni
Fogū
Lafarma
Kafa
Cata

[643] * The ground of ill health is a pretext rather than the true reason—and this is very significant. The *Kpotū* does not belong to the house of Usman Zaki, although he is generally regarded as belonging to this dynasty. He is a descendant of Abdu Gboya, one of the sons of Mallam Dendo whose offspring had failed to secure succession to the throne of Nupe. He is, in fact, the only member of these 'second-rank' royal families who had obtained, still in the fourth generation, one of the three highest dynastic positions. His premature resignation is a striking evidence of this dynastic policy to restrict succession to the throne to the three 'houses'.

3. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Saba* (*House of Etsu Masaba*)

(Late *Etsu* Saidu, died 1935.)
Wacimbe
Nákonji, District Head of Gbangba. Chosen to succeed to office of *Kpotū*. Fief in pre-European times: Yeti.
Lukpā
Tsaduya
Tsaci
Tswasha Giraba†
Tsuroma†

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupé FF52

An unsuccessful army would never retreat, or return to Bida with the goal unachieved. One would call for reinforcements from the capital, which would be sent out together with a new *Nna 'Kū* to replace the unsuccessful commander-in-chief. If these troops too were unable to bring the war to an end, the *Etsu* would take command personally, at the head of a third army composed largely of his own bodyguard and of the household troops of noblemen who had not joined the troops previously. During the king's absence from the capital a regency council, headed by the *Ndeji*, would be appointed to look after things at home. In the Yagba war the *Etsu* did not join the army but stayed behind, with his bodyguard of 200 men, which, together with the household troops of four noblemen who had remained in Bida, were the only trained soldiers to oppose the British attack. The king and the noblemen of high rank took the field accompanied by their whole household staff of slaves and servants, and often by their wives as well. They stayed in the Great Camp—consisting of huts of grass and matting—which was put up behind the fighting line or established in a hamlet near-by. A number of Nupe villages betray by their names that at one time the Great War Camp, *edokó*, had stood on their site.

The Nupe war was carried on till the capital of the enemy, that is, the village or walled town in which the chief resided, was captured. If the chief and the other leaders fled, they would be pursued until they were captured or until further pursuit became impossible. Often a fugitive chief sought refuge with the king of a neighbouring country whose territory the Nupe troops would have to respect. All captured places were looted and burnt, and the whole enemy country devastated. But slaughter was avoided as far as possible—the defeated enemies were more valuable alive, to be sold later as slaves. Only when rebellions had to be put down by force of war the enemies, above all chiefs and leaders, would be killed mercilessly, either in the battle, or later in Bida, whither they were taken to be executed.

No less well defined than the etiquette of warfare were the rules and conventions governing the economic aspect of the Nupe wars—the division of loot and booty. All booty taken before the decisive battle—the capture of the enemy's capital—belonged to the king and was dispatched to him immediately. Upon the capture of the town *wasóso* was declared, free looting, in which everyone who fought in the battle could join. The shares in the spoils of war varied according to rank and position. The slave soldiers had to deliver everything to their masters but were rewarded with a small share in the booty they had taken. The *bara* soldiers could keep all booty in kind—(called *dukiya*, wealth)—but were expected to present some of it to their overlords as 'gift of thanks'; of the slaves whom they captured they had to surrender half the number to their overlords. The independent fighters, i.e. the sons of noble houses, kept whatever they captured, both 'wealth' and slaves, except for a voluntary gift to the head of the house. If I have at various occasions in this book called war in Nupe a profession and a source of income, these facts substantiate that view.

Let me conclude this description with the report of an eyewitness of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by cowering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner.

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver.

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1]

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakǫtsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiši* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'.

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Song of Etsu Bello

The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

I: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
B643 pous title of *Majì Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
794 recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
642 and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
797 after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661]

[1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndako gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Majì Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúži* and *sarakiži*, or more precisely by those *gitsúži* and *sarakiži* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiẽ*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiẽ*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaži*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934–6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiẽ* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikã*, the uninhabited bush; also all village land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzankã* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Mahki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'corporate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. More of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esoži*, where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esoži* is placed under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esoži* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esoži* has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch with his *esoži*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esoži*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esoži* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil.

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankâ* arrangement. But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu* in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efako* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

Western crafts are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

Pottery is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

Shea-butter manufacture is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

Indigo-dyeing is practised only by a few *Kona* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

Women's weaving is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

Weapons and tools include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

Dug-out canoes are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

Musical instruments include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

Gabi figures are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

643 The ndakó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuy* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

Status and Titles[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuy*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.
[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.
[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.
[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.
[9] See below, p. 35.
[10] See below, p. 36.
[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuy* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

4: Temple G-4 (no date).1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the [redacted] flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neighbouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [684 672]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [935] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation.

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 682 696 [686]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [682] 586

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[847] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

5: Nadel
622, 643 ●

FF52 Nupe FF52

[Information concerning the chief of the Kede sub-tribe has been placed in category 634. --Analyst]